(b) whether the volume of informal trade is larger than the formal trade; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to bring the items which are at present traded unofficially into the official tradable list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The quantum of formal trade between India and Pakistan during the last three years is as follows:

(Value : In US $ Million)

Year	Exports to Pakistan	Imports from Pakistan	Total trade	Rate of growth
2000-2001	186.32	64.03	250.35	–
2001-2002	144.01	64.76	208.77	(–)16.6%
2002-2003	206.16	44.85	251.01	20.2%
2003-2004	286.55	57.74	344.29	37.2%
2004-2005 (April-Nov.)	314.54	66.25	380.79	145.8%

SOURCE : DGCI&S, Kolkata

(b) However, there is no compilation of data about the informal trade as carried out for the formal trade. The only method to estimate informal trade flows is through primary surveys carried out by different private organisations and published in various study papers etc. The technique of such study also keeps varying and hence there are only estimates of informal trade available with the private organisations.

(c) The Government is keen to improve bilateral trade relation with Pakistan and setting up of the Joint Study Group (JSG) at the level of Commerce Secretaries of both the countries was a step in that direction. This JSG had had its first meeting on February 22-23, 2005 at New Delhi where both sides had detailed discussion on promotion of trade and economic cooperation for the mutual benefit.

Trade deficit

1544. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trade deficit increased during April-December in 2004-05 as imports rose by 335 per cent during the period;

(b) if so, the nature and details of the items of imports and the increase in imports thereof, item-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to keep the deficit in check?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Imports were valued at US $73.65 billion during April- December 2004-05 representing a rise of 33.64 per cent ove the corresponding period of previous year. Trade deficit amounting to US $20.15 billion was recorded during April-December, 2004-05, which was 71.34 per cent higher than US $11.76 billion recorded during the corresponding period of previous year.

(b) According to the provisional data provided by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), the major items of import during April-November, 2004-05 and the growth rate over corresponding previous period is as under:

Major Import Commodities-April-November, 2004-05

(Value in US$ billion)

Sl. No.	Commodities	2003-04	2004-05	Growth Rate (%)
1.	Petroleum, Crude & products	12792.12	19362	51.36
2.	Electronic goods	4589.16	6225.24	35.65
3.	Gold	4261.52	5742.18	34.74
4.	Pearls, precious stones, etc.	4219.96	5145.57	21.93
5.	Non-electrical machinery	2855.59	3795.86	32.93
6.	Organic chemicals	1694.20	2387.74	40.94
7.	Coal, coke and briquettes	926.48	1829.34	97.45
8.	Vegetable oil	1813.95	1622.32	-10.56
9.	Metalliferrous ores and Metal scrap	839.38	1442.06	71.8
10.	Iron & Steel	869.5	1410.40	62.21

(c) There are no measures to restrict imports or artificially balance trade that may lead to dampening of the growth of the economy or lead to resurgence of inflationary pressures. However, export promotion is a constant endeavour of the Government and a Foreign Trade Policy was announced on 31st August, 2004 with the objective of doubling India's overall share of global merchandise trade within the next five years.